
A farmer in the French Alps is being taken to court because his cows are too noisy. Neighbours say the cowbells on his herd at a village near the town of Annecy are keeping them awake at night. Hugh Schofield reports from Paris:

Michel Deronzier grazes his herd of 70 **dairy cattle** on fields just outside the village of Villaz, in the **pastoral bliss** of a French Alpine mountainside. Several of the animals wear cowbells - not for decoration, he insists, but for the very practical reason that they can be more easily located if they **stray**.

But several of Monsieur Deronzier's neighbours have had enough. They say that **the constant chiming** of the cowbells is stopping them sleeping, and now one of them has filed a suit at the courts demanding that the herd be kept away.

Monsieur Deronzier is naturally furious, but he might be comforted if he knew that his case is far from unique. In recent years across France there's been a series of **law-suits** over such **rustic nuisances** as the crowing of cocks, the quacking of ducks or the clanging of church bells.

It's a reflection of the changing **sociological face** of the French provinces. Most of the law suits are filed by a new type of rural **inhabitant**: former **town-dwellers** who've come in search of the silence and instead find life in the countryside **disquietingly** loud.

Hugh Schofield, BBC News, Paris

Vocabulary and definitions

dairy cattle	cows used for milk products
pastoral bliss	perfect happiness in the countryside
stray	get lost
the constant chiming	the frequent ringing sound
law-suits	when problems are taken to court for a legal decision
rustic nuisances	situations in the countryside that cause problems for others
sociological face	social attitudes
inhabitant	someone living in a particular place
town-dwellers	people who live in a city or town
disquietingly	causing anxiety or annoyance

More on this story: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/1944202.stm

Read and listen to the story and the vocabulary online:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/newsenglish/witn/2008/09/080908_cows.shtml